

Petru Maior, the Transylvanian School Influencer

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PETRU MAIOR
(1760–1821)

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Premise

THE QUESTIONS we intend to answer are the following ones: what does the discourse of the Transylvanian School still represent for us today and what significance does it have for us? What makes the message of the Transylvanian School (after all, the most famous brand in our modern culture, in a Romanian world that did not see the completion of the Enlightenment) a “classic” one? We got used to saying that the Transylvanian School provided a pattern, a way of finding a compatibility with the Western world, and showed how important attitude, rigor, mobilization and teamwork are—in the long run—within a

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culture. These intellectuals expressed many things about us both coherently and critically. We can say that the discourse of the Transylvanian School is comparable to that of the contemporaries, while being also competitive.

The Romanians practically entered the European historiographical circuit by means of the texts published at that time, namely, the historical, linguistic, and theological work of the most important “influencer” of the Transylvanian School: Petru Maior. In Maior’s works, history was no longer perceived as a series of events, but rather as a commentary on them, its interpretation seeking to extract the significance of the given facts. This approach mainly attempted to illustrate the intrinsic pattern of a well-documented historian engaged in his contemporary historical debate and controversies. All of the above explain the evolution and development of history as a science in the historiography of the Transylvanian School. From the first timid polemical overtones of Samuil Micu and Gheorghe Șincai, they eventually became dominant in Ioan Budai-Deleanu’s writings and in Petru Maior’s work.

How did Petru Maior (1760–1821) become the most important “influencer” of the Transylvanian School? He was the most visible and efficient writer among the members of the Transylvanian School. He published everything he wrote during his lifetime except for two theological works: *Procanon* (1783) and *Protopopadichia* (The power of the archpriests) (1795).¹ He himself merged the last one into *Istoria Besearicei românilor* (The history of the Romanian Church) (1813), a mature work which, due to the circumstances and the conflict between the author and his superior, Ioan Bob, was published in an unfinished form. Otherwise, Maior published *Didahii* (1809), *Propovedanii* (1809), and *Prediche* (Sermons) (1810–1811),² and two histories: *Istoria pentru începutul românilor în Dacia* (History of the beginnings of the Romanians in Dacia) (1812)³ and *Istoria Besearicei românilor* (1813).⁴ The printing house of the University of Buda, whose censor and proofreader of Romanian books was Maior himself (1809–1821), even printed the linguistic and historical controversy with Bartholomeus Kopitar or the *Lexicon* of Buda, and Maior brought a decisive contribution to its completion (it was published after Maior’s death, in 1825). Due to these achievements, Maior passed on to his descendants a work of synthesis and public awareness on the ideology and conception of the Transylvanian School, with a formative role for the next generations of Romantic intellectuals.⁵ Petru Maior promoted and defended the ideological triptych of the Transylvanian School: the Romanians’ *Roman and Latin origins*, and their *continuity* in Dacia, which made the author of the Transylvanian Enlightenment one of the most important polemical writers in Romanian culture. Through his coherent work, he made the discourse of the Transylvanian School—which was ultimately synthetic, concise, and polemical—compatible and engaged in a dialogue with the Central Europe-

an Enlightenment. Petru Maior's work made the discourse of the Transylvanian School known and famous, even popular among the European and Romanian intellectuals of the time.

Maior's polemical writings (both historical and philological) benefited from the achievements of Enlightenment rationalism, generated by the ideological atmosphere of the Catholic and Josephine reformism. Discussing the *Aufklärung*–Josephine relationship, his polemical writings were, in fact, the product of their environment, i.e. of the polemical debates and of the ideology of the time in which they were produced. It is enough to mention the fact that his *History of the Beginnings of the Romanians in Dacia* (1812) illustrates the historiographical imperatives of the time, the enlightened ideals politically instrumentalized, put in the service of the nation,⁶ and the complementarity of the Enlightenment ideology with the Romantic one⁷ at the beginning of the 19th century. The work highlights the direct contact between various influences, and the political and cultural ideology of an era of transition from the Enlightenment to Romanticism, for which history acquired the valences and attributes of a political discourse.⁸ Complementarity was the result of the transformations to which the cultural environment of Buda and Pest had been exposed, and of the general Josephine atmosphere, contaminated by the spirit of the Göttingen School of history. Unlike the weak influence seen in Micu's or Şincai's works (who also knew the program of August Ludwig von Schlözer and Johann Christoph Gatterer from Göttingen), the spirit of the Göttingen School began to impose itself due to the Hungarian, Slovak, Serbian, and Czech intellectuals who had attended this institution. It was also present in Maior's and Budai-Deleanu's national discourse focused on history and linguistics and centered upon the problem of the origins, and in the predilection for demonstration and the combativeness of the historical argumentation.⁹

The environment in which Şincai and Maior found themselves while in Buda and the debate about the works published at the Printing House of the University of Buda favored and maintained a certain polemical atmosphere around the themes and topics in vogue at that time. Petru Maior embraced all this creative effervescence, and met the scientific demands in terms of philology, history, and polemical standards. He thus bestowed a dimension of his own upon the historical and linguistic topics to which his predecessors, Şincai and Micu, had also contributed in the past: Roman and Latin origins, anteriority, and continuity. The entire atmosphere of creative emulation from Buda and Pest demanded, however, the specification of his own point of view regarding the Romanians' origin and historical becoming and contributed to the outlining of the work of the Transylvanian School, thus inducing its propagandistic character, similar to the one of the Central European historiographical products. The shift of em-

phasis from the eventual reconstruction of the historical past, professed by Micu or Şincai, continuing the humanist and the pre-Enlightenment tradition of the Romanian Principalities, to the propagation, diffusion, and, finally, the imposition of the synthetic discourse of the Transylvanian Enlightenment was reserved for Petru Maior's work.

History is Brought into Play

IF IN Gheorghe Şincai's and Samuil Micu's works we are dealing with a history of eventual reconstruction, in Maior's and Budai-Deleanu's writings history seen as reality had to be transformed into history as discourse. Their entire work was an attitudinal one, meant to refute foreign assertions regarding the Romanians' history, i.e. a historical discourse built as a response. Specific to Maior is the fact that his historical work was, from a compositional point of view, a discourse that gained in meaning and significance compared to that of his predecessors, not by repeating the arguments or the type of historical construction, but by standing apart. Thus, Budai-Deleanu and Maior broadened the historical perspective towards the fields of philology and even politics, attempting to transform the historical discourse into a polemical one, always under construction and continuously argued. Marked by the pre-Romantic ideology and following in Micu's footsteps, Maior transformed any statement, compulsorily, into a demonstrative one. He was the one who, due to his appetite for dialogue and keen on ensuring the scientific foundations of his historical discourse, definitively transferred national individuality from the cultural to the political field.¹⁰ The situation was explained by the possible contact that Micu, Şincai, and Maior had with Herder's work or with the pan-Slavic, mainly cultural and scientific ideas, that circulated in Vienna, and, later on, in Buda (Ján Kollár, Jernej [Bartholomeus] Kopitar, Pavel Jozef Šafárik).¹¹

It should be noted that with Samuil Micu, Gheorghe Şincai, Petru Maior, and Ioan Budai-Deleanu all types of scientific discourse fall under the incidence of the national doctrine and receive a strong political note because they are true discourses on the origin, the definition and becoming of the national identity, in which the Romanians' religion, tradition, culture, language, and history are subject and object of dispute. Maior's *History of the Beginnings of the Romanians in Dacia* (1812) remains significant due to its publication, impact, and circulation at that time. It was a work constructed as a response to the attitude of the contemporaries who had retaliated against the political action of the Romanian Transylvanian elite (the *Supplex Libellus Valachorum* of 1791) and especially against the historical arguments in the *Supplex* that justified and legitimized

all the subsequent texts of the Transylvanian School.¹² In 1812, it was Petru Maior's turn to synthesize and thematically organize¹³ the whole argumentative and historical basis previously gathered by his colleagues (Miron Costin, Cantemir, Micu, and Șincai). The ideological triptych, subsumed, until then, to the historical discourse (Roman and Latin origins, and continuity), completed with the history of the Romanian Middle Ages and its personalities, and the role of the Romanians in defending and promoting Christianity in this area (the favorite topics of Cantemir, Micu, and Șincai's predecessors), had to be highlighted in a study capable of convincing both the public opinion interested in the subject and the detractors of the Romanian *Supplex*. Unlike Micu and Șincai, Maior's conception was not formed and did not materialize by gradual accumulation. At the time of drawing up Maior's *History*, it was difficult to choose the central theme, i.e. the most appropriate topic for controversial debates. The aim was to convince the reader with an unbeatable logical organization of the historical argumentation, placed in the service of the national claims. Thus, the debate around the Romanians' origin became part of the discourse of the Transylvanian School as a theme meant to synthesize all the previous informational and conceptual accumulation; it was an attitudinal history, par excellence.

Petru Maior's historical discourse convinces us that the great efforts expended in the fields of language and history defined the Enlightenment, which was not at all an anti-historical one, as Romanticism pictured it, but an age that, on the contrary, manifested an acute interest in national history. Basing his work on "hard evidence," Petru Maior wrote against the untruths spread by "foreigners and evildoers." Seeking to explain "the beginnings of the Romanians in Dacia," he attributed to them (in the wake of Cantemir) a purely Latin origin, which can be explained as a reaction against the humiliation to which his people had been subjected for centuries. The answer was provocative but we must admit that—volens nolens—it deviated from the truth.¹⁴ In Maior's vision, priority had to be given to the historical element constructed on the background of the national ideology, which owed almost everything to the historical discourse built around its complementary components: Latin, Roman origin, continuity, and unity. These ideas had also been broadly formulated in the works of Cantemir, Micu or Budai-Deleanu, but they were put into circulation by Maior's work. Maior's *History* explores the origins of the nation, its continuity on the territory of Dacia, the individualization of the Eastern Roman world through the organization of the medieval institutions, and the relationship between church and state. Following the chronological presentation of the events, and despite the title he chose (*History of the Beginnings of the Romanians in Dacia*), Maior inserted in his work ample chapters in which the presentation of events is secondary to the issue of the origins, the arguments for the Romanian permanence, or the criti-

cal thinking directed towards the refutation of non-historical assertions. This concern was part of a wider European movement, in which the research into the history of the peoples of the continent and the identification of their origins aimed to establish a connection between Antiquity and the nations that populated the continent. In fact, the same thirst for *origins*¹⁵ was evident everywhere in the Central European Enlightenment literature.

Entirely meant to prove the uninterrupted life of the natives in Dacia, both the *History of the Beginnings of the Romanians* (1812) and the *History of the Romanian Church* (1813) illustrate the tendencies that animated the Romanian historiography and other often remarkable intuitions. Of course, the historian presented the emergence of the feudal states and the political medieval history rather inaccurately and according to the level of the historical understanding of the time. He was able to identify the moments when the Romanians asserted themselves in their struggle against foreign domination (he followed the example of his predecessors, Samuil Micu and Gheorghe Șincai). He presented Mircea the Elder, John Hunyadi, Stephen the Great, and Michael the Brave fully aware that they all illustrate the history of a single nation. Maior insisted on the history of Transylvania, emphasizing the data that highlighted the primacy of the Romanian civilization and the historical role that the Romanians had played in the Middle Ages. However, Maior's *History* was not eventful but both problematic and militant.

Even the theological works written by Petru Maior in his youth had a militant streak, attempting to prove the specificity of the Romanian Church in Transylvania. I am referring to the *Procanon* and the *Protopopadichia*, both subsumed under the national discourse. *Procanon* scrutinizes the core of the most acute controversy that had troubled Europe's religious life: the infallibility of the pope in Rome and his primacy in the Christian Church.¹⁶ The approach to the anti-clerical spirit of Febronius started from the topic of the work, the problem of rights and privileges, and the issue of the Romanian National Church in Transylvania. His vision was strongly influenced by the position of the German bishops, who, referring to the Febronian principles of thought, proclaimed their autonomy from the papacy. This was the spirit that animated the conception and structure of the second work, *Protopopadichia*, which integrated itself perfectly into the atmosphere of that time. The thesis was amply resumed in the *History of the Romanian Church*, a work on the attributions of the "country council," with a fundamental role in the organization and leadership of the Romanian church. The specification is significant, given that the synod was the only officially recognized Romanian institution. The *Protopopadichia* is quite remarkable, and it shows erudition, critical thinking, and, at the same time, astonishing speculative intellectual mobility. It skillfully illustrates an age of tension, when Romanians

had to choose between their fidelity to tradition and the temptation of Catholicization. Due to the ideas comprised in the structure of the work, fed by the fundamental values of the first Christian centuries, which corresponded to the tradition of the Eastern Church, and due to the construction of the discourse in the *Protopopadichia*, its author seemed attached to the values of the Catholic Reformation. Petru Maior considered that it was time to strengthen the doctrine of his own church by consolidating the Eastern theology and by adopting new Gallican ideas, meant to reform the church and to consolidate it as a national institution, yet within Catholic universalism. The recourse to the original Christian tradition served the idea of preserving the synodality of the Church, thus ensuring a democratic character to the functioning of its own institutions and the founding of a religious doctrine that would not alter the traditional faith. Synodality, in the case of the Catholic Reformation (Counterreformation), in general, under the sign of Febronianism and Gallicanism, together with the idea of an autonomous Greek Catholic Church for the Romanians, and the fidelity to the Habsburg reformism were only facets of an evolving phenomenon meant to assert the national autonomy.¹⁷

The resemblances between the ideas of the Catholic Enlightenment (outlined in the works of Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, Joseph Bingham, Justin Febronius, Petrus de Marca or Paolo Segneri) and Maior's theses from the *Procanon* or *Protopopadichia*, and even Maior's knowledge of Josephus Kereszturi's view and texts, at the moment of writing his *History of the Beginnings of the Romanians*, indicate the compatibility of the discourse of the Transylvanian School with the valid scientific discourse of that time. The convergence was achieved precisely due to Maior's talent and to the power of his demonstrative discourse in European historiography. The road was paved by the role played by the controversy with Josef Karl Eder, Johann Christian von Engel, Franz Josef Sulzer, etc. outlined in his *History of the Beginnings of the Romanians* and by the constant desire of this Transylvanian man to connect with the thematic historiographical concerns of his time. Thus, the desire to write a discourse on a par with the one practiced at that time is more than obvious. In Maior's writings, the tradition of Baroque historiography (noticeable in his homiletic work) is very much alive. It was fuelled by the contact with the Central European historiography (Febronius, Schlözer, Kopitar, Kereszturi, Eder, and Engel), and the Italian, English, and French representatives (Segneri, Bossuet, Muratori, Bingham, Leake, or Voltaire, etc.) that inspired him at a formal level. The features of Enlightenment historiography, the rationalist interpretative overtones (especially of the German historical school), and the Romantic sensitivity in defining the Romanians' characteristics and character are also present. The historian's desire was to outline the spiritual profile of his people. Due to the abovementioned particularities

and to how he managed to adapt all these influences to the specific Romanian features, and due to his intuitions and combativeness known and recognized by contemporaries and descendants alike, Petru Maior was—as far as the Romanian historiography is concerned—the promoter of a new movement that defined the European historical writings of that time: *Sturm und Drang*.

We could say that the *History of the Romanian Church* was the first extensive edited work of thematic synthesis regarding the history of Christianity and the church on the entire territory inhabited by Romanians, from Antiquity to the author's contemporary era. The text preserves the structure of Maior's work: the origins of Christianity, and its antiquity and continuity on the territory of ancient Dacia. It illustrated the author's view and penchant for the movements of the Catholic Reformation (Gallicanism, Febronianism), the adoption and application of Bossuet's principles and Fleury's criticism in an ingenious synthesis, and the predilection to comment on an institutional history in the manner of Febronius. Although texts with a similar theme had already appeared in the historiography of that time, being known and quoted by Maior himself,¹⁸ we must notice that, at the time of its publication, Maior showed immense courage in approaching a topic rarely visited in the Romanian historiography of the time. Due to the author's desire for such a historical reconstruction and by relating the Romanians' institutional history to contemporary historiography, the subject seemed a new one, even if comparable concerns might have been noticed in *Istoria Besearicei din Ardeal* (Transylvanian Church history) by Samuil Micu and integrated into a synthesis on the history of the Romanians,¹⁹ probably unknown to Maior.

The polemical exchange generated by the *History* (1812) was carried out by Maior with Kopitar and Sava Tököly, and it had a decisive role: it contributed to the affirmation and diffusion of the Romanian point of view, and enriched the argumentative arsenal of the Transylvanian School with Petru Maior's instruments and vision contaminated by Romanticism. The effective and efficient character of Maior's work—which actually guaranteed its subsequent fame in the context of the Romanian pre-Romanticism and Romanticism—was given by the fact that it was a work generated and supported by the will to challenge the Hungarian or Saxon historiography of Transylvania on the Romanians.²⁰ This reality determined, in the Romanian historiography, the exercise of a recuperative effort, in relation to the Hungarians and Saxons as well, but it also allowed the finalization of a permeable work. In none of Maior's works do we find a simple mimetic adaptation of his views and ideas to the European models at hand at that time. Hence the character of Maior's historical discourse, its realistic and flexible relativity, adapted to the context. Sulzer, Engel, and Eder were the opponents of the representatives of the Transylvanian School but they played a coagulating role in this respect, namely, they made the representatives

of the School focus on some controversial topics of that time. At the same time, they also played a stimulating, decisive role, and helped to clarify the Enlightenment ideology professed by the Romanians. They were particularly useful in streamlining the militant discourse promoted by Micu, Șincai, and Maior, which was always positioned at the boundary between history and politics. Comparing the Romanians with the ‘others’ (Sulzer, Engel, Eder), we discover the Transylvanians’ ability to *creatively assimilate* the contradictions and ideological nuances of the time, which gave motivation and coherence to their own point of view. We must not omit the fact that the Enlightenment Transylvania was also the homeland of Franz Josef Sulzer, at one point, of Peter Bod, or of Joseph Benkő, also interested in the history and politics of the Principality and involved in the atmosphere that generated the controversy around the *Supplex*, at the end of the eighteenth century. With the exception of Sulzer, who was an army officer, all the others were priests, educated in the atmosphere of the Catholic or Reformed European schools. These schools had already experienced the controversy between the Catholics and the Reformed, between Greeks and Latins. The intellectuals trained in this kind of atmosphere entered the debates with their accumulated experience, and they were very efficient, easily moving from the disputes in the confessional realm to the historical and ideological, political and militant debates.

An Attitudinal *Aufklärer* Par Excellence

PETRU MAIOR, a Transylvanian *Aufklärer* of the third generation of the Transylvanian School, must be understood not only in relation to his ideological contribution. Like Samuil Micu or Gheorghe Șincai, he responded to both civic or intellectual and religious and practical obligations. As far as Micu, Șincai, Maior and any *Aufklärer* are concerned, there can be no rupture between the scholarly activity and that of enlightening.²¹ In addition to their scholarly or political work, they also wrote homilies to the believers and texts of moral guidance,²² which nowadays suggest that we are dealing with intellectuals in the modern sense of the word, i.e. with symbolic representatives of their communities. Religion and religious life were perceived by Micu or Maior as instruments of moral, civic, and practical action. However, the main contribution brought by the priest scholar Petru Maior was that he managed to introduce the Romanians’ history in the European historiographical and polemical circuit of the 19th century.

This approach was continued by the future generations of pre-Romantics and Romantics along the creative scientific lines established, followed, and de-

fined by Maior's work, and the Romanians' history and language alike.²³ Petru Maior wrote history in order to express an attitude and channeled his historical discourse towards the political realm. He did not make history and did not write history for the sake of history or science like Şincai, but in order to express—officially and openly—an attitude towards his age and the political issues of his time. His *History* (1812) contributed to the formation of an attitude and imposed a certain trend in the Romanian historical discourse, valid for the future generations: a discourse that served the political demands. He instituted this procedure in the footsteps of Inochentie Micu Klein. Together with his colleagues, Samuil Micu and Ioan Budai-Deleanu, he also set in motion the political struggle based on historical rights. It was the strategy applied in the Transylvanian Romanian political thought up to the *Memorandum* of 1892, a moment that illustrated, moreover, the failure of *History* as a strategy of political struggle.²⁴ He did not cultivate the univocal, but the statement, the verdict, even the disciplined error, we could say, always supported by arguments and demonstrations, such as “The Romans did not marry Dacian women.” It was amazing that, in the age of rationalism, the Romanian Enlightenment conquered the reader and listener with the plasticity of its message, while accusing its opponents (Sulzer, Engel, Eder) of a lack of logical reasoning with formulas such as “the stick is in the corner, it's raining outside.”

Maior was not just a priest, nor was he exclusively a historian. He was priest and historian alike. First of all, however, he was the priest who served his parishioners and parish, defended his condition and status as an archpriest, and took an attitude in this capacity before the local ecclesiastical and political authorities throughout his life, as we can see in his correspondence.²⁵ Maior's work written after 1791 did nothing but defend an idea, a program, and a Romanian political action by means of cultural instruments. He allowed himself to be perceived in different hypostases of the spirit: the historian, the theologian, and the linguist who wrote an eminently attitudinal work. This is the red thread that defined his creative destiny from 1783 to 1813. Petru Maior was a spirit who took action. In the *Procanon* (1783), as a Catholic, he criticized the ostentation of the papacy. In the *Protopopadichia* (1795), he defended the values and the traditions of his Eastern Church which he served and defended against Catholic universalism from the same perspective: as a Catholic of the Eastern rite. He was the Romanian *who took a stand* and responded, in 1812, by writing the *History of the Beginnings of the Romanians in Dacia* against all those who questioned the origin, character, and the becoming of his people. In 1813, the same Maior wrote the *History of the Romanian Church*. Following in the footsteps of Samuil Micu, Maior wanted to make known the specifics of the Greek Catholic Uniate Church, which he wanted to present to his contemporary academic community

interested in the Romanian people and its institutions. The extra- and intra-Carpathian Eastern Romanian Church and its proper evolution within Catholic universalism represent the specificity of the Transylvanian Romanians and a part of their history in relation to the other Transylvanians.

The historical discourse and all the contributions of the Transylvanian School indisputably had a purpose, a program pursued and gradually put into practice by these three generations of Romanian Transylvanian intellectuals. It was a project devised by the generation of Gherontie Cotore and Grigorie Maior, yet started by Samuil Micu. Micu gradually gathered and systematized the internal chronicles and the general plan of the historical discourse of the Transylvanian School in his works, *Brevis Historia Notitia* (Short historical notice), *Scurtă cunoștință a istoriei românilor* (Brief presentation of the history of the Romanians), *Istoria românilor cu întrebări și răspunsuri* (A history of the Romanians with questions and answers), and the ample synthesis *Istoria românilor* (History of the Romanians).²⁶ The one who seconded and assisted Micu, up to a certain moment, was Gheorghe Șincai, the emblematic representative of the second generation and the one who managed to complete and offer to the contemporaries an evidence-based, coherent and credible image of Romanian history. Having the same strategy as Micu, i.e. that of gradual construction, he managed to systematically cover the documentary gaps in the history of the Romanians, mainly using external documents: first, in the collection *Notata ex variis authoribus*, and later on in the collection *Rerum spectantium*. Șincai also provided a complete image at the level of the documentary restitution—see, in this respect, *Hronica românilor* (The chronicle of the Romanians).²⁷ The third generation and mainly Petru Maior disseminated and popularized the discourse of the Transylvanian School, putting it in the European ideological context. With the controversy assumed and professed in *History of the Beginnings of the Romanians in Dacia*, Maior offered to his contemporaries and descendants alike an attitudinal history, giving—by the power of the argument—authority to the written word. In his works, *Istoria Bucovinei* (History of Bukovina), *Lexiconul românesc-nemțesc* (The Romanian-German lexicon), and mainly in the elegant, polyglot, and equidistant *De originibus populorum Transylvaniae*, Maior's friend and collaborator, Ioan Budai-Deleanu, employed a very documented and gradually argued discourse, and placed the discourse of the Transylvanian School in the European scholarly circuit of that time. He also outlined the complete identity-related, historical, and philological view for the descendants of the Transylvanian School.

The historical rights demanded and received preeminence in the discourse of the Transylvanian Romanians from the moment of the religious union of the Romanians with the Church of Rome (1697–1701). They were later invoked, demonstrated, and claimed in order to place the Romanians in the political

system of Transylvania alongside natural law, since the time of Inochentie, in all the Romanian political *Supplexes* of the eighteenth century (1743, 1744, 1791, 1792) and mainly in the historical controversy fuelled by the *Supplex Libellus Valachorum* (1791) and popularized in the discourse of the Transylvanian School. The moment of the religious union facilitated the birth of the historical argument of the Romanians' Roman origin and continuity, a theory put in the public and militant circuit by Bishop Inochentie Micu and disseminated in the public space of the European scientific and cultural ideas by the types of identity discourse assumed and professed by the Transylvanian School starting with the middle of the 18th century: linguistic, theological, historical, and political. As far as the Transylvanian School is concerned, the definition of the historical view regarding the Roman origin and continuity emerged gradually, from the moment of the religious union to the time of Inochentie Micu and Gherontie Cotore and, later on, to Samuil Micu and Gheorghe Șincai. The maturation and instrumentalization of the issue of our Roman origin and continuity in the political struggle was done in the works of Petru Maior, who tried to convince his contemporaries that "it is difficult not to tell the truth." This image of the historian seen as holder of the (absolute) truth was faithfully adhered to in Romanian culture by the pre-Romantic generation. Maior conquered this generation with his authentic, undisguised, vigorous, and convincing patriotism, and became guide and adviser to the Romanian political movement. Eloquent, in this respect, is the presence of Maior's work, *History of the Beginnings of the Romanians*, annotated by the owner, in Tudor Vladimirescu's library, and the fact that Mihail Kogălniceanu received the same "book of the nation" as a prize for good school performance during the *Vormărz* (D. Prodan).²⁸

(Translated by CARINA DUBAN)



Notes

1. The manuscript of *Procanon* is unknown. It was edited by Constantin Erbiceanu: *Procanon ce cuprinde în sine cele ce sânt de lipsă spre înțălesul cel deplin și adevărat al canoanelor și a toată tocmeala bisericască, spre folosul mai cu samă a românilor* (Bucharest: Tip. Cărilor Bisericești, 1894). Reprinted, with the title changed by Grigorie T. Marcu: *Procanon ce cuprinde în sine ceale de lipsă spre înțălesul cel deplin și desăvârșit al canoanelor și a toată tocmeala bisericască, spre folosul mai cu samă a românilor* (Sibiu: Tip. Arhidiecezană, 1948). See also Petru Maior, *Protopopadichia*, edition, introduction, notes, glossary, index, abstract, selective bibliography by Laura Stanciu, foreword by Pompiliu Teodor (Alba Iulia: Muzeul Național al Unirii, 1998).

2. Petru Maior. *Propovedanii la îngropăciunea oamenilor morți* (Buda: Crăiasca Tipografie a Universității Ungurești, 1809); *Didahii, adecă învățături pentru creșterea fiilor; la îngropăciunea pruncilor morți* (Buda: Crăiasca Tipografie a Universității Ungurești, 1809); *Prediche sau învățături la toate duminicile și serbătorile anului*, three parts (Buda: Crăiasca Tipografie a Universității Ungurești, 1810–1811). For its first reprint, see *Predici sau Invețături la toate Duminicile și Serbătorile anului. Culese de Petru Maior de Dicio-Sân-Martin, Paroch Sas-Reghinului și protopop Gurghiului în Ardeal, precum și la înălțatul cniiescul locumtenențiale Consilium al Ungariei cniiesc cărșilor revizor. Editate acum întâia dată cu litere latinești, după ediția din Buda de la 1811*, edited by Elie Dăianu, parish priest and archpriest (Cluj: Carmen Petru P. Barițiu, 1906); *Propovedanii la Ingropăciunea Oamenilor Morți. Culese de Petru Maior de Dicio-Sân-Martin, Paroch Sas-Reghinului și protopop Gurghiului în Ardeal, precum și la înălțatul cniiescul locumtenențiale Consilium al Ungariei cniiesc cărșilor revizor. Editate acum întâia dată cu litere latinești, după ediția din Buda, de la 1809*, edited by Elie Dăianu, parish priest and archpriest (Cluj: Carmen Petru P. Barițiu, 1906). For recent reprints, see *Didahii, adecă Învățături pentru creșterea fiilor; la îngropăciunea pruncilor morți*, edition, introduction, notes, glossary, abstract by Laura Stanciu and Ioan Adrian Circa (Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2011); *Prediche sau Învățături la toate duminicile și sărbătorile anului*, edited by Laura Stanciu and Alin-Mihai Gherman (Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2017).
3. Petru Maior, *Istoria pentru începutul românilor în Dacia*, edited by Florea Fugariu, foreword and notes by Manole Neagoe, 2 vols. (Bucharest: Albatros, 1970–1971). Another edition, with an afterword by Gavril Istrate: n.p. [Iași]: Junimea, 1990.
4. Petru Maior, *Istoria Bisericii românilor*, vol. 1, edited with an introduction by Ioan Chindriș (Bucharest: Viitorul Românesc, 1995).
5. Laura Stanciu, “Școala Ardeleană, un subiect epuizat? Revizitarea unui concept,” *Annales Universitatis Apulensis*, Series Historica (Alba Iulia) 8 (2004): 105–112.
6. Moritz Csáky, *Von der Aufklärung zum Liberalismus: Studien zum Frühliberalismus in Ungarn* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981), 171–176.
7. Eduard Winter, *Frühliberalismus in der Donaumonarchie: Religiöse, nationale und wissenschaftliche Strömungen von 1790–1868* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968), 44, 65. See also Béla Köpeczi, *Lumières et nation en Europe Centrale et Orientale* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1980), 11.
8. Emmanuel Türczynski, *Von der Aufklärung zum Frühliberalismus: Politische Trägergruppen und deren Forderungskatalog in Rumänien* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1985), 105, 231; Peter Hanns Reill, “Aufklärung und Historismus: Bruch oder Kontinuität?,” in *Historismus in den Kulturwissenschaften: Geschichtskonzepte, historische Einschätzungen, Grundlagenprobleme*, edited by Otto Gerhard Oexle and Jörn Rüsen (Cologne–Weimar–Vienna: Böhlau, 1996), 45–68. See also Horst Walter Blanke, “Aufklärungshistorie und Historismus: Bruch oder Kontinuität,” in *Historismus in den Kulturwissenschaften*, 69–97.
9. On the influence of the Göttingen School on Hungarian historiography, see Éva H. Balázs, “A magyar jozefinistak külföldi kapcsolataihoz: Schlözer és magyar tan-

- itványai,” *Századok* (Budapest) 97, 6 (1963): 1187–1203; ead., “A. L. Schlözer und seine ungarischen Anhänger,” in *Formen der europäischen Aufklärung: Untersuchungen zur Situation von Christentum, Bildung und Wissenschaft im 18. Jahrhundert*, edited by Friedrich Engel-Janosi, Grete Klingenstein, and Heinrich Lutz (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1976), 251–269. For its influences on Romanian historiography, see Iosif Wolf, “Repere europene în istoriografia Şcolii Ardelene,” in *Stat, societate, naţiune: Interpretări istorice*, edited by Nicolae Edroiu, Aurel Răduţiu, and Pompiliu Teodor (Cluj: Dacia, 1982), 276–289. See Carl Göllner, “Der Einfluss der Göttinger Universität auf die Aufklärungsphilosophie in Rumänien,” *Revue des études sud-est européennes* (Bucharest) 7, 4 (1969): 599–611. See also Victor Neumann, “Exegeza trecutului ca militantism politic: Cazul gândirii lui Ioan Budai-Deleanu,” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie “George Bariţiu,”* Series Historica (Cluj-Napoca) 47 (2008): 345–361.
10. Keith Hitchins, *The Identity of Romania*, 2nd enl. edition (Bucharest: Ed. Enciclopedică, 2009), 71–75.
 11. Balázs, “A. L. Schlözer und seine ungarischen Anhänger,” 251–269. Also Stanislaus Hafner, “Bartholomäus (Jernej) Kopitar in der wiener Romantik,” in *Bartholomäus (Jernej) Kopitar: Neue Studien und Materialien anlässlich seines 150. Todestages*, edited by Walter Lukan (Vienna–Cologne–Weimar: Böhlau, 1995), 9–28.
 12. Robert Wuthnow, *Communities of Discourse: Ideology and Social Structure in the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and European Socialism* (Cambridge, MA–London: Harvard University Press, 1989), 311–349.
 13. Maior, *Istoria pentru începutul românilor în Dacia* (1970–1971); id., *Istoria Bisericii românilor* (1995).
 14. Al. Zub, *În orizontul istoriei* (Iaşi: Institutul European, 1994), 27–37, 115–119.
 15. Laura Stanciu, *Biografia unei atitudini: Petru Maior (1760–1821)*, foreword by Iacob Mârza (Cluj-Napoca: Risoprint, 2003), 165–177.
 16. Lucian Blaga, *Gândirea românească în Transilvania în secolul al XVIII-lea* (Bucharest: Ed. Ştiinţifică, 1966), 188–199. See Maria Protase, “Semnificaţia politică a ‘Procanonului’ lui Petru Maior,” *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai*, Series Philologia 2, fasc. 2 (1963): 61–66. See also ead., “Le ‘Procanon’ de Petru Maior, réplique sud-est européenne des attaques anti-papales du XVIII^e siècle,” *Revue des études sud-est européennes* 11, 1 (1973): 39–56; ead., *Petru Maior: Un ctitor de conştiinţe* (Bucharest: Minerva, 1973), 79–95.
 17. Pompiliu Teodor, “Petru Maior: Aufklärung und Nation,” in *The Enlightenment and Romanian Society*, edited by Pompiliu Teodor (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1980), 244–262. See also id., *Sub semnul Luminilor: Samuil Micu* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2000), 180–193.
 18. We refer here to Josephus Aloysius Kereszturi, *Compendiaria descriptio foundationis, ac vicissitudinum episcopatus, et capituli M. Váradinensis* (Magno-Varadini, 1806), and to Josephus Benkő, *Milkovia, sive antiqui Episcopatus Milkoviensis per terram Transilvani-*

cam, maxima dioeceseos suae parte, olim exporrecti, explanatio, 2 vols. (Vienna, 1781), both quoted by Maior.

19. Samuil Micu, *Istoria românilor*, edition princeps of the manuscript edited by Ioan Chindriș, 2 vols. (Bucharest: Viitorul Românesc, 1995).
20. Wolf, 276–289. See Edit Szegeđi, *Tradiție și inovație în istoriografia săsească între baroc și iluminism* (Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2004). See also Gudor Kund Botond, *Istoricul Bod Péter (1712–1769)*, foreword by Iacob Mârza (Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2008), 369–411.
21. Ioan Chindriș, Introduction to Maior, *Istoria Bisericii românilor* (1995); id., *Cultura și societate în contextul Școlii Ardelene* (Cluj-Napoca: Cartimpex, 2001); id., *Transilvanica* (Cluj-Napoca: Cartimpex, 2003), 37–57, 381–396, 453–536, 757–763, 847–854. See also Ioan Chindriș and Niculina Iacob, *Petru Pavel Aron* (Blaj: Astra, 2007), 14–154.
22. Laura Stanciu and Ioan Adrian Circa, “Petru Maior, *Didahii*: A Representative Book for Central European Enlightenment,” *Brukenthalia: Romanian Cultural History Review: Supplement of Brukenthal. Acta Musei* (Sibiu) 1, 1 (2011): 44–50. See also Laura Stanciu, “‘A Stairway to Heaven’: The Role of Homiletics in Shaping the Romanian Enlightenment in Transylvania,” *Brukenthalia: Romanian Cultural History Review: Supplement of Brukenthal. Acta Musei* 10 (2020): 1045–1053.
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25. Petru Maior, *Scripta Minora: Ars literaria. Animadversiones. Epistolarium. Ultima*, edited by Ioan Chindriș (Bucharest: Viitorul Românesc, 1997).
26. Ioan Chindriș and Niculina Iacob, *Samuil Micu în mărturii antologice* (Târgu-Lăpuș: Galaxia Gutenberg, 2010), 7–10, 13–16, 329–402, 403–418.
27. Ana Maria Roman-Negoi, *Recuperarea unui destin: Gheorghe Șincai, Hronica românilor*, foreword by Eva Mârza (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2008), 93–246.
28. Alexandru Istrate, “The Perception of Enlightenment Transylvania in Moldavian Sources,” in *Transylvania in the Eighteenth Century: Aspects of Regional Identity*, edited by Laura Stanciu and Cosmin Popa-Gorjanu (Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2013), 217–237.

Abstract

Petru Maior, the Transylvanian School Influencer

The present study highlights the elements that individualize Petru Maior's identity and historical discourse within the ideology promoted by the Transylvanian School. The author analyses the originality of the Romanian Enlightenment in relation to the main movements that influenced the identity discourse of that time: *Aufklärung* and *Sturm und Drang*. This research emphasizes Maior's contribution to the emergence of a generation of Romanian Romantic intellectuals. The attitudinal message of Maior's work provided a pattern that strengthened the political discourse of the 1848 generation.

Keywords

Transylvania, religious life, Greek Catholic Church, modern history, rationalism, pre-Romanticism, Romanian culture